February/March, 1985 $2.00

HOME COMPUTER DIGEST

News and Happenings in the Home Computer World

FEATURE

Phineas In Nutriland. . . . . pg. 5

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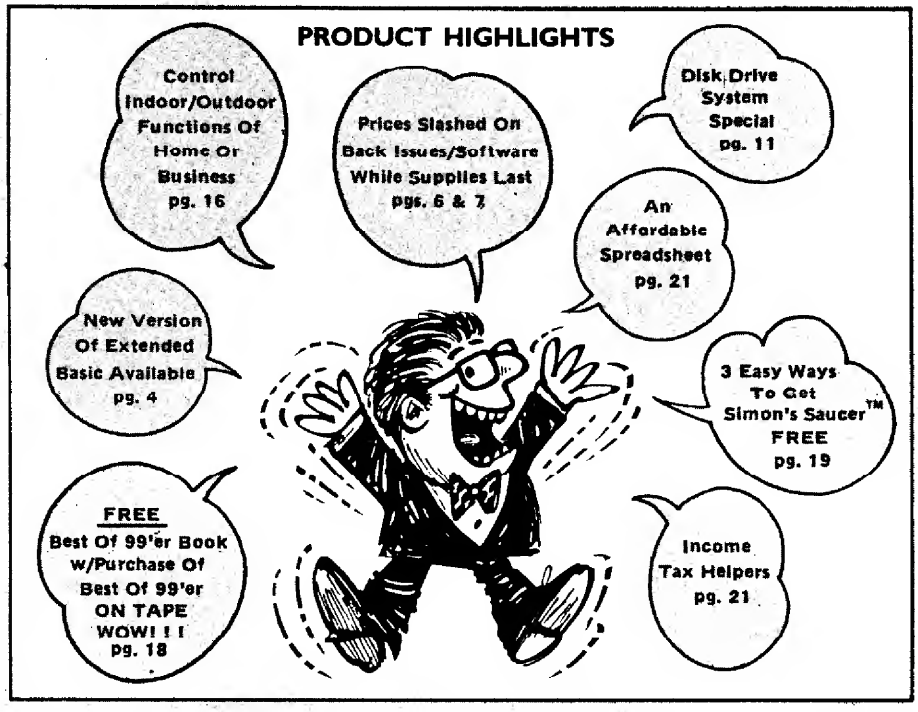

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A Printer For All Reasons

Search For The Best High Quality Graphic Printer

If you have been looking very long, you have probably discovered that there are just too many claims and counter claims in the printer market today. There are printers that have some of the features you want, but do not have others. Some features you probably don't care about, others are vitally important to you. We understand. In fact, not long ago, we were in the same position. Deluged by claims and counter claims. Overburdened by rows and rows of specifications, we decided to separate all the facts — prove or disprove all the claims to our own satisfaction. So we bought printers. We bought samples of all major brands and tested them.

Our Objective Was Simple

We wanted to find that printer which had all the features you could want and yet be sold directly to you at the lowest price. We wanted to give our customers the best printer on the market today at a bargain price.

The Results Are In

The search is over. We have reduced the field to a single printer that meets all our goals (and more). The printer is the GP-550TI from Seiko sha, a division of Seiko. We ran this printer through our battery of tests and it came out shining. This printer **can** do it all. Standard draft printing up to a respectable (and honest) 96 characters per second, and with a very readable 9 (horizontal) by 9 (vertical) character matrix.

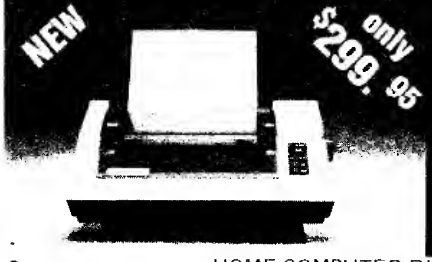
"NLQ" Mode

One of our highest concerns was about print quality and readability. The GP-550TI has a print mode termed Near Letter Quality printing (NLQ mode). This is where the GP-550TI outshines all the competition. Hands down! The character matrix in NLQ mode is a very dense 9 (horizontal) by 18 (vertical). This equates to 14,400 addressable dots per square inch. Now we're talking **quality** printing. You can even do graphics in the high resolution mode. The results are the best we've ever seen.

Features That Won't Quit

With the GP-550TI your computer can now print 40, 42, 65, 80, 96, or 136 characters per line. You can print in ANY of 18 font styles. You not only have the standard Pica, Elite, Condensed and Italics, but also true Superscripts and Subscripts.

Do you sometimes want to emphasize a word? It's easy, just use **bold** (double strike) to make the words stand out. Or, if you wish to be even more emphatic, underline the words. Or do **both**. You may also wish to "headline" a title. Each basic font has a corresponding elongated (double-wide) version.You can combine any of these modes to make the variation almost endless. Do you want to express something that you can't do with words? Use graphics with your text — even on the same line.



You can now do virtually any line spacing you want. You may select 6, 8, 7⅛ or 12 lines per inch. PLUS you have variable line spacing of 1.2 lines per inch to infinity (no space at all) and **97** other software selectable settings in between. You control line spacing on a dot-by-dot basis. If you've ever had a letter or other document that was just a few lines too long to fit a page you can see how handy this feature is. Simply reduce the line spacing slightly and.... VOILA! The letter now fits on one page.

Forms? Yes! Your Letterhead? Of Course!

Do you print forms? No problem. This unit will do them all. Any form up to 10 inches wide. The tractors are adjustable from ½ to 10 inches. Yes, you can also use single sheets. Plain typing paper, your letterhead, short memo forms, anything you choose. Any size under 10" in width. Multiple copies? **Absolutely!** Put forms or individual sheets with carbons (up to 3 deep), and the last copy will be as readable as the first. Spread sheets with many columns? **Of course!** Just go to condensed mode printing and print a full 136 columns wide. Forget expensive wide-carriage printers and changing to wide carriage paper. You can now do it all on a standard 8½" page.

The Best Part

When shopping for a quality printer with all these features, you could expect to pay around $500 or more. Not any more! We have done our homework. You don't have to worry about interfaces or cables. Everything is included. We are now able to sell this fantastic printer for **only $299.95!** No expansion chassis or anything else is needed. You can continue to use **ANY** other devices you have with your TI 99/4A. All TI 99/4A graphics are included. This printer does everything the Texas Instruments printers do but has more features. **You need absolutely nothing else to start printing – just add paper.** If desired you can purchase an interface for other computers and use the GP-550TI with it.

No Risk Offer

We give you a 15-day satisfaction guarantee. If you are not completely satisfied for any reason we will refund the full purchase price. A 1-year warranty is included with your printer. The warranty repair policy is to repair or replace, and reship to the buyer within 72 hours.

The Bottom Dollar

The GP-550TI is only $299.95. Shipping and insurance is $3.00 — UPS within the continental USA. If you are in a hurry, UPS Blue (second day air) is $15.00. Canada, Alaska, Mexico are $25.00 (air). Other foreign is $60.00 (air). California residents add 6% tax. These are cash prices — VISA and MC add 3% to total. We ship the next business day on money orders, cashiers' checks, and charge cards. A 14-day clearing period is required for checks.

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PHINEAS IN NUTRILAND

by Rhea J. Grundy
HCM Staff

Phineas T. Saccharide is in the middle of a technician's nightmare . . . he has to write a review—and of the new nutrition programs recently released on the market. Phineas, rarely an athlete and never a dieter, has gone home depressed. We come upon him now, late at night, freshly-opened fitness software packages stacked upon and strewn across his oak compudesk. One piece of stale pizza pokes its pepperoni eye from beneath a stack of aborted beginnings to his review. He takes a long draw on his last beer for the evening, stretches, burps, and stubbs out his cigarette. No more tonight. Sometimes he's just not in a creative mood.

We find our beloved Phineas now safely tucked in his bed, little Teddy Bear's ears just visible from beneath the covers. See how Phineas trembles in his sleep. What is it that he dreams? Let's investigate.

Vision Or Reality?

Falling, falling into darkness, Phineas found himself tumbling into a dimly-lit, tunnel-like passageway. Rubbing his eyes and brushing the dirt from his pajamas, he squinted at a figure rapidly approaching. "It's a White Rabbit, and he's jabbering away about something," thought Phineas.

"Remember: Take it slow and easy. Let your new exercise program gradually work its way into your daily schedule."

"Exercise is very important. I do it each day. These programs help me plan my time. For instance," he chattered, shoving a package called *Physical Fitness* into Phineas' face, "this one will measure my pulse rate."

"It will?," queried Phineas. "That's supposed to be important, isn't it?"

"I count my heart beats. Then the computer beeps. I enter the value, and it tells me the rate. It's a fast way to find out if I'm overdoing it. Too-much-too-quick is bad for the ticker. This program is easy to use. It's a start. And a little start is better than none at all."

"All this Rabbit needs is a little start, and he never stops," said Phineas to himself.

"Then there's this *Physicalc* package. Using this program is a hassle—confusing and clumsy. You have to load two separate programs just to get a simple graph of your data, and this wastes time. As we all know, we use computers to save

cont. on page 5

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time—not waste it. So, I'd have to say, and you know I'm an EXPERT, it's not user friendly."

Shake It Up

Before Phineas could get a word in edge-wise, the Rabbit babbled on . . . "Next is *Aerobics*. It's the best. Get's the blood pumping, and that's good for the heart.

Phineas grimaced. Could a program like this help him?

"He was somewhat overwhelmed by the information being hurled at him. Did he need these packages to keep fit and healthy?"

"If A La Carte is your menu selection," puffed the White Rabbit as he demonstrated a few exercises for Phineas, "you can choose: The Body Bop, Waist Away, Wee Willie Waist, Lay Lady Legs, Daddy Long Legs, Bye Bye Buttocks, A Little Behind!, Land O'Legs, Arms Race, Hoola Hips, Humdinger Hips, Up in Arms, Out of Arms Way, Belly Up, and Tummy Time."

"You'd better be in fairly good shape before you jump into a 60 minute segment, though. Remember: Take it *slow and easy*. Let your new exercise program gradually work its way into your daily schedule. You'll stay with it that way," cautioned the Rabbit, staring at Phineas' paunchy middle. Then, after a quick glance at his pocket watch, the Rabbit took his leave and hopped away.

Go Ask Alice

Stumbling further into his dream, Phineas found a little girl carrying two software packages, one under each arm.

"These programs are almost identical. They're called *Nutritionist* and *Nutritionist II*. You could use either. Number One calculates nutrients in a complete and easy-to-understand way. Number Two adds a custom exercise schedule.

Interrupting their conversation came Tweedledum and Tweedledee strolling down the lane arm-in-arm. They stopped abruptly in front of Phineas and Alice, greeted them, and continued their argument about the packages they were holding: Tweedledum grasped *Nutri-Calc* and Tweedledee clutched *Nutriplan*. They raged, kicked, and screamed until Alice stopped their spat. "You silly boys," she scolded. "You know these programs are almost alike. They both calculate nutrients and calories, and that's nothing new. But *Nutriplan* is easier to use. Its directions are brief, but accurate, and its graph is prettier too."

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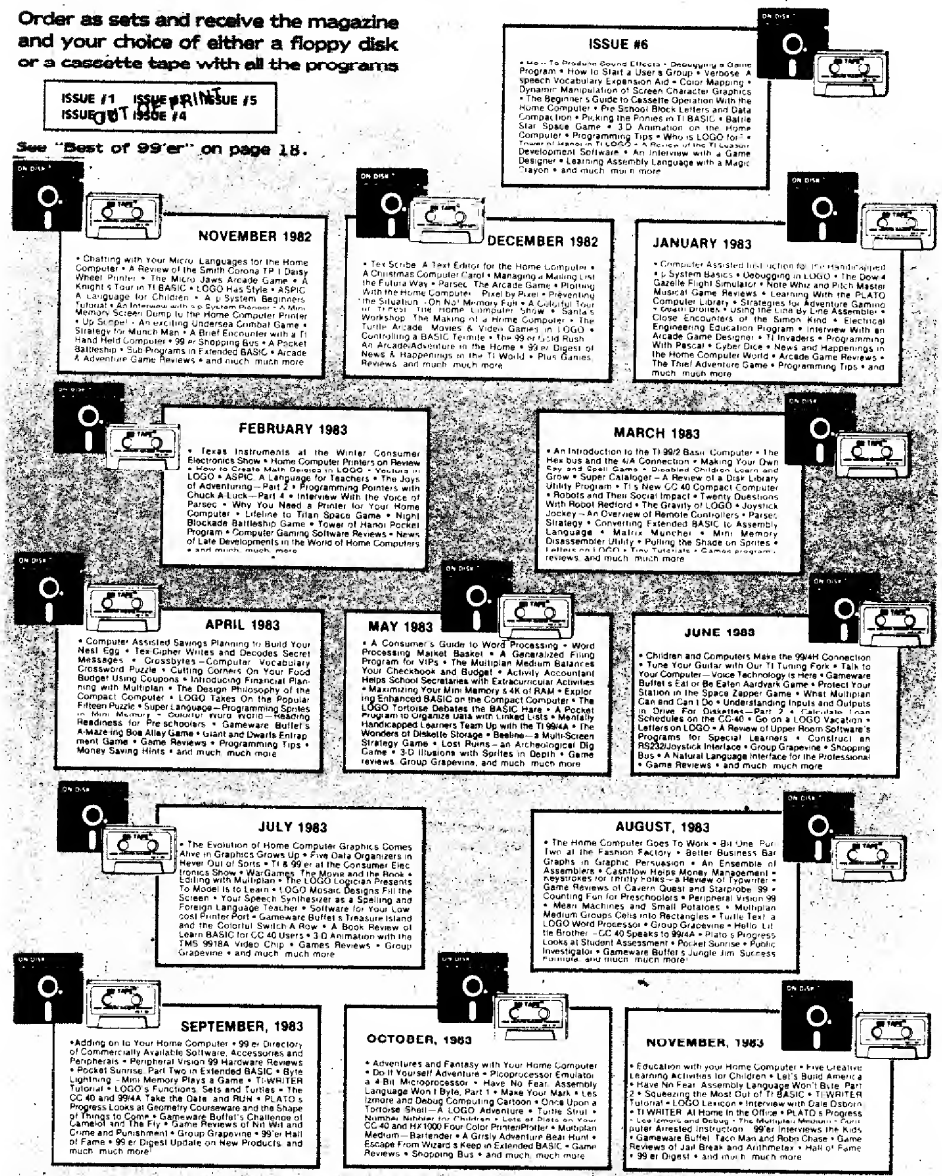

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Ho-humming as if her opinion really didn't matter, Tweedledee and Tweedledum went on their arguing way.

Alice, continuing in her software-guide voice, said "If you don't know anything about the nutritional value of the food you're eating, Phineas, these programs could teach you something."

Phineas began to drift to his own conclusions. He was somewhat overwhelmed by the amount of information being hurled at him. Did he *need* these packages to keep fit and healthy? He'd gained weight, quietly accepted it, and not daring to face that silent suppressed realization that he needed to do something about it, Phineas remained quiet.

"Snap out of it," said Alice, snapping her fingers in front of his face. "Wake up. We're late for tea!"

A Master of Ambiguity

Phineas turned and found he was sitting at a long table with a funny little man wearing a polka-dotted bow tie and very large top hat who was pouring from an empty tea pot while leisurely browsing through a software manual entitled, *Master Control: A Diet and Exercise Program*.

"I wonder if he knows the teapot is empty?," thought Phineas.

"Of course, I do," said the Hatter. "I never have to refill it that way. It's more economical, and keeps my weight down, too. Would you care for more tea?" asked the Hatter as he sipped from his empty cup and nibbled an invisible biscuit.

"Want to read my weight-loss manual? It's supposed to go with this *Master Control* software program, but it's so hard to use I just read this when I want some encouragement. Would you like some more tea?"

"No, you go on ahead. I'm all full up," said Phineas. "Need to stretch the legs a bit. Nice meeting you." And Phineas made his escape from this strange little man.

Phineas was wandering, feeling disoriented when Alice reappeared. "Which way now?" mused Phineas.

They wandered. Only after remembering they were going nowhere in particular did they find themselves in a grand courtyard where little diskette men bustled to and fro. Without delay, the two were announced to her royal highness, the Disk Queen.

Roaring in her grand, bellowing voice, she screeched to Phineas, who bowed and scraped before her: "Get up, you fool! What a *fat* little fellow you are. You're in miserable shape. Oh well, off with his head anyway! We're late for our jog."

Phineas, taking control of *his* dream, made his escape to the garden. Seeking a hiding spot, hoping he wouldn't be diskovered, Phineas crawled under a large mushroom and waited. He overheard the Queen and Alice returning from their jog.

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". . . to gleen their benefits, you can't just sit in front of your home computer."

A Caterpillar's Advice

"My sense of proportion must be off—or this is the biggest mushroom I've ever seen," puzzled Phineas as he stretched on tip-toe, peeking on top to investigate. To his amazement he found a very large, blue Caterpillar wearing spectacles, staring at him. When Phineas attempted a greeting, the Caterpillar snapped his eyes shut and assumed his most convincing meditative posture. The intruder would just have to wait for *his* advice.

Finally, after what seemed like an appropriate interval of respectful silence, the Caterpillar opened his eyes, and in his most inflated lecturer's voice, began his lesson: "We have many avenues we can take to make changes in our lives, Phineas. One area where we can take charge of the quality of our life is in the way we feed and exercise our bodies. In no other area are the results so apparent to those we meet."

"Oh no, not the 'If I know what's good for me' lecture again," grumbled Phineas. But he stayed and listened anyway.

"Do you need software programs to motivate you to exercise and monitor your fitness goals?" droned the Caterpillar. "Or do you use your home computer for seemingly more productive ventures? Do you have fitness goals?"

The questions came faster than Phineas could answer. His mind was spinning—a reluctant cocoon of crystalizing thoughts.

"Are you already being exposed to enough information that focuses on this topic," continued the Caterpillar, "like: television fitness-guru programs, health spas, exercise videos, best-selling diet plans, low-calorie cookbooks, diet clinics and counselors, and of course, your family physician's advice? These are questions you must ask yourself, Phineas. Will your new fitness software be neglected after a few weeks—much the same as your new jogging suit was?"

Phineas had to admit that his expensive jogging suit had barely made it out of the shopping bag when it was abandoned—like the rest of the diet fad products and gimmicks he'd purchased and deserted.

Realizing that the Caterpillar was expecting a response, Phineas stammered, "What you're saying is that I actually have to get up and *use* these programs to get my money's worth." Phineas knew this was an obvious answer; he'd thought of it before . . . and conveniently forgot it.

"Yes, Phineas, to gleen their benefits, you can't just sit in front of your home computer. And there is something else only you can decide," coaxed the Caterpillar.

"What's that?" asked Phineas.

"Do you really need them?" And with that final remark, the Caterpillar leisurely closed his eyes and turned away from him.

A Change Of Heart

Suddenly, the Disk Queen appeared in the garden before Phineas. He started shaking in his slippers. She took his arm and guided him to her parlor for a chat.

cont. on page 22

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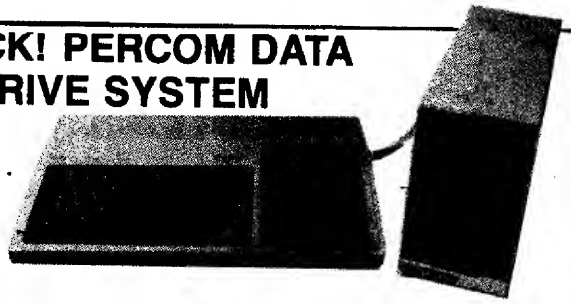

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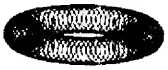

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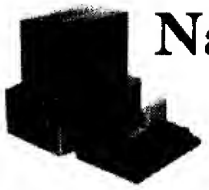

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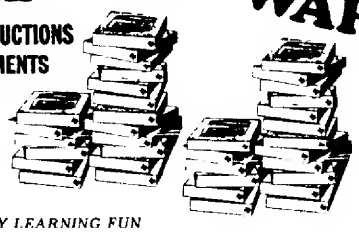

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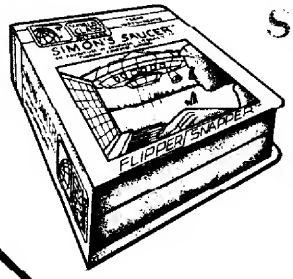

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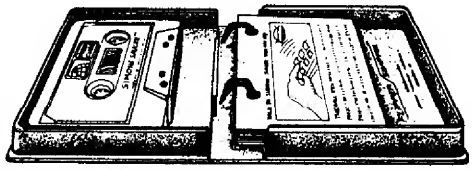

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Phineas felt like he was receding from the room somehow; he was losing his focus. But he could hear the Disk Queen's voice: "The road you take now will make all the difference. I'll be watching. Ah, there's the bell for croquet. Good luck, Phineas, and remember, I'll be watching."

The sound of the bell grows louder and louder until it is all that Phineas is conscious of. Trying to lift himself out of the parlor chair, he finds himself sitting upright in his own bed, sheets tangled all around him. The alarm clock is blaring, but little Teddy Bear lies quietly beside him.

"That sure was a curious dream," said Phineas to himself. "No more pizza after nine o'clock. Phew, I feel like I've been walking all night!"

That afternoon, while Phineas is sitting at his desk, he vaguely recalls something else from his dream. He knows it has something to do with goals and his diet. If he could salvage it, he could possibly use it in his review.

HCD

Nutriland Software

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Aerobics, an exercise program from Spinnaker Software, 215 First Street, Cambridge, MA 02142, runs on the C-64 ($44.95) and requires a disk drive and joystick. Versions for the IBM PC and the Apple *II* family will be released in 1985.

Nutriplan, a nutrient calculator from Micromedx, 187 Gardiners Avenue, Levittown, NY 11756, runs on the Apple *II* family and the IBM PC/XT/jr computers; it retails for $75.

Nutri-Calc, a dietary nutrient calculator from PCD Systems, Inc., 163 Main Street, Penn Yann, NY 14527, runs on the Apple *II* family (single or double disk drive versions) and the IBM PC. It retails for $129.

Physical Fitness, an exercise program from Texas Instruments for the TI-99/4A, is distributed by Triton Software Products, PO Box 8123, San Francisco, CA 94128. The cartridge sells for $15.95.

Master Control: A Diet & Exercise Program, from Healthware, 2300 Round Rock Ave., #209, Physicians Plaza, Round Rock, TX 78664, runs on the IBM PC/PCjr and retails for $69.95.

Physicalc Exercise Program, available from Digital Cybernetics Intl., PO Box 264, E. Amherst, NY 14051, runs on the TI-99/4A (cassette, $39.95; or diskette, $49.95) and the C-64 (diskette, $49.95). It will be released at a later date for the IBM PC and the Apple *II* Family. Purchasers need to buy a tape measurer and calipers to use this program.

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